rummaged in the boxes – not only had they survived, but they had tripled in size!

From then on, the larvae never looked back. I continued with the apple, though the larvae showed a marked preference for fresh beetroot which stood up well to their ravages. Turnip was also reluctantly accepted. The larvae soon became too large to hide in excavations in the fruit. Instead, they spun silken tubes within the wood shavings from which they emerged to attack the apple. As I write (January 1997) 144 larvae are safely tucked-up asleep in loose silken cocoons. How I miss the unique combination of goat-smell and cider, the fruit flies, being bitten and then spat at by ungrateful, ugly wildlife!

After all that, the 1996 season slowly petered out. A trip to Cornwall in late August produced more Small Mottled Willows and a few Clouded Yellows *Colias croceus* Geoffr. but trapping was spoiled by yet more cool, clear nights. A few more immigrant moths appeared at home in September and October, but numbers of resident moths were low. I added only the Deep-brown Dart *Aporophyla lutulenta* D.&S. to the garden list.

Even a poor season leaves memories. Watching Minotaur beetles *Typhaeus typhoeus* L. on the Quantocks in February, those Painted Ladies in June, a Dotterel with chicks on a Scottish mountain, catching French butterflies in baking sunshine in July and catching Grey Bush-crickets *Platycleis denticulata* Panzer with my daughter on the sandhills overlooking the sea in August. And who could ever forget those Goat Moth larvae?

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Zygaena filipendulae L. and *Z. trifolii* Esp. (Lep.: Zygaenidae): aberrant colonies

Z. filipendulae is a species in which aberrations are usually rare. In May 1974 this species and *Z. purpuralis* Brünn. were abundant on Fanore Strand, Co. Clare, Ireland, and it immediately became apparent that an extraordinary number of the former were of confluent forms in which the pairs of red spots tended to coalesce laterally, culminating in ab. *cytisi* Hb. I estimated that over 30% of the specimens exhibited this feature to some degree, the commonest expression of which was for the distal pair of spots to form a large blotch and the other pairs to show some enlargement of the individual spots laterally, but to remain separate by virtue of the black vein between them. Nevertheless, many of the specimens had all three pairs of spots conjoined laterally. Subsequent examination has revealed a tendency for the basal spots, and especially the costal one, to extend up the costa, frequently to reach the level of the median pair of spots, and in one of my ten specimens coalesces with it. Perhaps, surprisingly, there was no evidence of other expressions of enlargement of the spots longitudinally.

Between Fanore Strand and the coast road is a well-trampled grassy strip, and beyond the road at the foot of the hillside is a different habitat characterised by tall grass, and in May 1974 many of the grass stems were adorned with *filipendulae* cocoons, mostly with pupae or pupating larvae. Moths here were later in emerging, and all were normal as were the moths which emerged from collected cocoons.

I returned to Fanore Strand in May 1975; *filipendulae* were much less in evidence and no confluent forms were observed; in May 1987 all specimens seen were normal. However, I understand that Bernard Skinner has come across these aberrant *filipendulae* at Fanore Strand in other years than 1974.

A somewhat similar outburst of aberrant forms occurred in a small, isolated colony of *Z. trifolii* on the chalk escarpment at Wrotham Hill, Kent in 1952. The colony was revisited after the War, in 1949, 1950 and 1951. On 7 June 1951 a specimen of ab. *glycirrhizae* Hb. (the apical spot and the median pair coalesced) was found, and another on 20 June, all other individuals seen being normal. In late May and early June 1952 the moths were much commoner than had been noted in previous years, and confluent specimens were as common, perhaps more so, than normal ones, and included many ab. *minoides* Selys (all spots joined to form an irregular blotch). Despite several visits being made in 1953, *Z. trifolii* was scarce and no aberrant forms could be found, and the only noteworthy specimen noted subsequently was an ab. *minoides* in 1960, after which time the locality was rarely visited; road making and scrub invasion has almost destroyed the original habitat.

E.B. Ford (*Butterflies,* 1945 and *Ecological Genetics,* 1964) considers this phenomenon of the sudden appearance of aberrant forms in a colony, stating that it is invariably accompanied by a great increase in numbers of individuals, the aberrations disappearing with the colony returning to normal size. In the latter work in which a study of a fluctuating colony of *Melitaea aurinia* Rott. over a long period is described, the author states that it is a depressing fact that no other equally comprehensive observations of such events had been reported; nor have I seen reference subsequently, hence my recounting my limited observations on these two *Zygaena* colonies.

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A successful hibernated Camberwell Beauty *Nymphalis antiopa,* West Sussex, April 1996?

8 April 1996 was a fine spring day, with temperatures reaching 15°C for the first time in the year. It was the ideal day to visit Chiddingfold Forest on the Surrey/West Sussex border to observe the early flights of the Brimstone *Gonepteryx rhamni* and the spring Nymphalids. I also knew of a patch of Wild Daffodils *Narcissus pseudonarcissus,* as an added incentive for my wife to accompany me on this occasion.